



**Laurelhurst Community Center
Expansion Project
Public Meeting #3
February 3, 2005
Meeting Notes**

Guests present: Catherine Hart, Coral DeWilliam and Bob Suzuki of VIA Suzuki Architecture; Susan Zoccola, Project Artist;

Staff Present: David Goldberg, Parks Project Planner; Karen Lynch, Parks Public Relations Specialist; Dan Johnson, Parks Project Manager; Karen Keist., Landscape Architect.

Welcome and Introductions – David Goldberg

David welcomed everyone and opened the meeting. He reviewed the decision-making process used and explained the role of the Public Advisory Team (PAT) which includes members of the Laurelhurst Community Club and the Laurelhurst Advisory Council. He introduced the Via Suzuki Team; Dan Johnson; Karen Keist, Landscape Architect, Susan Zoccola, Project Artist and Joan Peterson from the Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs

Goals, Schedule & Input and Decisions to Date – David Goldberg

David gave a brief review of what's been done so far: some PAT meetings and two public meetings have been held. He has also met with the Design Commission and has had this project's existing building nominated to be a City landmark (the exterior only) for designation by the Landmark Preservation Board (and will meet with them in the future). He explained that while design will be finished in 2005, funding will not be available until 2006.

Final Schematic Design – VIA/Suzuki

Catherine Hart presented the final schematic design. She explained it's a work in progress and that they were looking for feedback. She reviewed the immediate project surroundings: grass to the east, a playground, dumpsters/service road in the back. There is 4,600 sq. ft. of programmable space being added to the current square footage of approx. 5,000 – nearly doubling the total size. Plan is to maximize views to the west, and create ADA accessibility.

Karen Keist spoke about old trees on this site (old chestnut trees) and the large meadow area. She mentioned that the access road is a design challenge. She told the group that the limited parking was addressed in the landscape plan; 5 options were drawn regarding parking. The preferred plan will result in 20 parking spaces, with 1 disabled space, in the same location near

the front entry. She said the Design Commission wants to retain the loop/entrance and widen it from its current 18 feet (width) to 26 feet (widening only the east side of the loop). That results in 9 *new* parking slanted-in spaces on the east side of loop. The one disabled parking space will be next to the front entrance, and there will be about 15 parallel spaces along the loop. The goal here is to create required access for emergency and fire vehicles.

There will not be many landscape changes; flowering cherry trees along the street are fairly old, and generally the plan is to take advantage of the beautiful landscaping existing. The landscape plan still needs to be looked at by a civil engineer regarding drainage, etc. She also explained that the planned entry area exterior art and parking area changes are interrelated.

Catherine Hart continued with a discussion about the final design, called Scheme B:

- Current multipurpose room is 1,900 sq. ft. and will be enlarged 2,500 sq. ft. to the west (Multipurpose room will also have an outdoor feel or have an outdoor use . IThe existing building's West wall will stay intact, but the windows will be enlarged on the floor below (to original size)
- Fireplace in the multipurpose room will become a lounge area
- Offices need to be placed centrally (with views to various parts of the facility)
- Kitchen
- Elevator is being put in a different location, to create more light
- Pottery room downstairs stays the same
- Restrooms will be downstairs with the shower, and a music space (plus exterior restrooms)
- Extra covered space downstairs will be available for storage or other uses
- New space ideally will have a peaked roof and similar architecture; and, inside the multipurpose room the ceiling would be slightly dropped to avoid affecting original ceiling
- The Landmarks Board Architectural Review Committee has suggested a few things:
 - “don’t create false historicism”;
 - make any addition look clearly different while being complementary to original architecture;
 - new multipurpose room can be “grand”;
 - the Committee would like to see a relationship from the entry into the fireplace room;
 - try to make outdoor space flow more naturally into interior;
 - they’d like a “simpler form” inside;
 - want to know what exterior materials will be used and suggest to use materials from the architectural era (wood?);
 - they want the driveway loop/approach preserved
- **Comment** Catherine Hart: Two examples of other buildings locally with old/new architecture that are clearly delineated are Seattle’s Columbia Branch Library and the Roundhouse

Community Center in Vancouver, B.C. The latter designed by Suzuki, a converted train station (added community center). These would good to look at if the opportunity arises.

Meeting was opened up to general questions and comments:

- Question: Tennis courts are brightly lit; will the new multipurpose room be too close to the tennis court/lights? (Project architects feel this is not close enough to be an issue/problem). Dan Johnson also said that it's possible to explore lighting controls for the tennis courts and see if they can be controlled from within the building by staff.
- Question: if the new roof is not dormers/peaked, will it be flat? The concern is that a flat roof looks "too modern" and this is not desirable.
- Comment: a woman felt that the City is ignoring neighbor input; specifically regarding the size of the multi-purpose room expansion – is it used that heavily? (Staff responded that the current capacity of 100-110 is always utilized when rented out, and have had to occasionally turn down rental requests for 150-200 capacity due to current limited space. Fire codes limit the number in a room at one time.)
- Comment: Perhaps the larger room can also be used for aerobics classes
- Question regarding Toddler Program: Will one of the activity rooms be dedicated to children's use and if so will there be drinking water nearby? Also, concern about the number of unsecured doors in the design; will there be a covered play space for the rainy months? A second attendee agreed with this concern. (Staff responded that the PAT felt a childcare room would be duplicating other childcare offered in the area; these concerns will be passed on to Maureen O'Neill who's in charge of programming at this community center. The multi-purpose room *will* have a sink, and close proximity to a restroom.
- Comment regarding serving a larger area than just Laurelhurst: About a 3 mile radius in the surrounding community uses the center; agrees with need for larger space.
- A fair amount of concern about aesthetic value and scale was expressed
- Question regarding a Teen Room: Can there be a room designated to supplement the gym at Laurelhurst School (which shares space with the community center)? The Advisory Council is looking at that idea; new community center space *will* be flexible; there is a staffing issue involved, however. The Advisory Council is forming a committee on this issue and meeting on Feb. 4. Possibility of building a designated teen room at the gym

Discussion of Public Art – Susan Zoccola

Project Artist, Susan Zoccola was introduced by Joan Peterson. Joan also reviewed the guidelines in the Community Center Art Plan. The focus for the art on this project is on concept and uniqueness to the neighborhood and community center. The artist selection process was explained (2 PAT members were on the selection panel). Five artists were interviewed out of 12 candidates. The panel liked Susan's design qualifications. Susan reviewed her background as a graduate from the San Francisco Art Institute and the University of Washington; she is an installation artist and has done both residential and private commissions; she received the 2002 Institute of Architects annual design award. The PAT is going to keep working with Susan on the art process. Susan wishes to hear what the community wants for this project.

Suggestions about an art theme: Look at the garden across the street. Try to use living/soft images, organic, reflecting nature, cherry trees, fruit; consider the history of the area (glaciated rocks); nostalgia; quality over quantity; hilltop location is unique.

General Concluding Comments:

Comment: This building could benefit by identifying the entry more clearly and linking the inside to the outside. The PAT said that the age range for users of the building is diverse, 2 to 80 years old/multi-generational.

Comment (Ken, PAT member): The only problem he has with the design is the issue of quality vs. quantity -- feels 2,500 sq. ft. scale of new building and excess space downstairs as a result is odd; he doesn't necessarily want a huge space for big events that attract a lot of people (due to parking issues). He believes multi-purpose room should be less than 2,500 sq. ft.

David responded that the PAT has not agreed that excess space is a problem. Another PAT member feels 2,500 sq. ft. is probably just fine, stating that 1,900 sq. ft. is currently too small for ideal usage.

It was mentioned that 2,700 sq. ft. was the *original* target for the multipurpose space. If the PAT does recommend having smaller rooms, they can still present the issue to Parks Project Steering group. David proposed doing an email poll on the issue.

David commented that this is a 50 year center – people “use up” space. An attendee agreed.

Regarding parking: David said an idea was proposed to build parking nearby (by the tennis courts) which is not feasible because it isn't close enough to the community center for easy walking especially for elderly.

Issue raised: If you live nearby, the people park in front of your house. Comment: Space is not the real issue; it's a lack of parking!

Another issue seems to be “using up” or paving over the open space/green space to build.

A PAT member said he feels the current direction is good; also based on polls they've done informally in the neighborhood.

Question: Will playfield be open during construction? (Answer: maybe; safety issues need to be looked at before a decision is made.)

Dan commented that we have to go through the Design Commission and the Landmarks Preservation Board for approval on the project design; we have a well-known design team whose Principal was raised in this community; he feels that the design team can do a great job. He said the public process needs to continue and that Parks will continue to meet with the PAT to go further into interior details. He reviewed the schedule and informed them that the schematic design will be done in March and design development will be finished this summer/fall.

Summary and Next Steps – David Goldberg:

Please contact David Goldberg regarding future public meetings on this project; there will also be more PAT meetings held for this project.

Adjourned - 8:30 p.m.